

PROFESSOR MILLS, THE ZENDAVESTA SCHOLAR.

•
BY THE EDITOR.

PROF. Lawrence Heyworth Mills holds the chair of Zend philology at Oxford, England, and is the leading authority on Zarathushtrian religion and literature. He is well known and highly respected among scholars, but since the public at large is not always posted on specialists, prominent though they may be in their own line, we will here for the benefit of our readers compile the main data of his career.

Professor Mills, though an English professor by residence and appointment, is a native American. He was born in New York, 1837, and is the son of the late P. L. Mills, a descendant of an old American family (in the country since 1693) whose name had been changed from "von Muehlen." One of his paternal ancestors studied at Yale in 1722, and one maternal ancestor is mentioned as having espoused the cause of the King in 1776. Dr. Andrews, author of the *Latin Dictionary*, re-edited by Lewis and Short, is also a paternal kinsman of his. His mother was Elizabeth Caroline Kane of the well-known old family of that name in New York, originally O'Cahan, of which Mr. Grenville Kane is now a prominent representative. He is married to Maria Bowen Swann, daughter of the late Robert Paige Swann of Leesburg, Va. He has three sons and a daughter now living, two sons having died in infancy.

Professor Mills received his education at the New York University, of which he holds the degree of D.D., and in the Theological Seminary at Fairfax County, Va. In 1861 he became Assistant Minister of one of the oldest churches in the country, Old St. Anns, in Brooklyn, Long Island, and was made Rector in 1866, succeeding Dr. Cutler, who himself succeeded Bishop McIlvaine. In 1868, he was called to St. John's, Hartford, Conn., succeeding the present Bishop of Albany.

He left for Europe 1872, and in 1873 accepted a position as

Associate Rector of the American Episcopal Church in Florence, Italy. He began studying the Dualism of the Avesta in 1876, having been led on to this subject by the necessity of examining the Gnostic Philosophy in its origin as being in all probability the real source of Hegel's "sublated negative." Having been from youth passionately devoted to interior investigations, he had endeavored to prosecute them while a parish clergyman, but found the two occupations incompatible. He laboriously re-read the Greeks and the Germans, and has still reams upon Kant which will only serve for posthumous cremations. He has the thanks of Zeller for undertaking the translation of his *History of the German Philosophy*. This he has still half completed; but he became so fascinated with Kant that he abandoned that translation for a special work. This engaged his time up to 1876. As said, his entire life's work came in through the study of the Gnosis begun in America before 1872.

From Florence he removed to Germany in 1877 upon the advice of his physician for the benefit of the health of a member of his family. Pursuing the subject in Germany he began to print tentatively his edition of the Gāthas with the four texts, the first three translated, this in 1879-81; and in 1883 he received the united urgent invitation of Professors Max Müller and James Darmesteter to undertake the most difficult volume in all the *Sacred Books of the East*, the XXXIst, which included a translation of the Gāthas. He came to Oxford in 1886-87 at the request of Prof. Max Müller to see this book through the press. The first instalment of stock sent to Bombay was at once sold out on its arrival. 1888 he was the means of procuring for the University Library what was at once reported by the Librarian as one of the "most precious gifts ever given it," viz., the oldest manuscript of the Yasna, a priceless codex, munificently offered without remuneration by the late High Priest of the Parsis, Destoor, Jamaspji Minocheherji, Jamasp-Asana, Ph.D., etc. of revered memory, author of a Pahlavi dictionary in five volumes, etc., etc. The Destoor had been offered £1000 for the manuscript by a wealthy Parsi, by no means an exorbitant price for such an object from such a person. To show its gratitude the University honored the venerable Destoor with a degree *in absentia* of D.C.L., an extremely rare occurrence.

Dr. Mills made up a collection among the leading officers of the University and sent the Destoor a costly gown. The signal gift of this manuscript afforded the Clarendon Press an opportunity of showing what it can execute in the way of unequalled workmanship. For it colliptyped the manuscript under the masterly management

of the Controller, Mr. Horace Hart, in its actual dimensions, even preserving the tint of the paper on a basis of brilliant white, manufactured especially for the purpose, an imposing volume of 765 large photographs. Nothing ever done in Europe of its kind surpasses it. It is even a commercial success, and is selling "slowly but surely" at eleven guineas.¹

Mr. Mills, though not wishing to "spoil" either the Parsis or the "Egyptians," still thought it would be more favorable to science to have the oldest manuscript in Europe and at the central seat of learning in the British empire; so he advised the Destoor again; and this time that distinguished scholar presented the oldest manuscript of the Yasna which is accompanied with the Sanskrit



translation, another valuable gift. This was, say, in 1890. He later procured permission to photograph other precious manuscripts sent him on loan by the Destoor and others, the curators of the Bodleian Library having the valuable MS. D in Gāthas, otherwise Pt. 4, again photographed at considerable expense by the Clarendon Press. Pursuing this policy up to the present moment, Mr. Mills has induced his auditors to copy codices for him sent on loan from the Munich Library and from the India Office in London to the Bodleian. One of these auditors, a lady of independent means, has just

¹ Strangely one prominent person was in favor of having only one copy collyptyped at enormous expense for presentation to the Destoor.

finished, say one eighth part, of the oldest manuscripts of the Vendidad, working for the Professor at the Library. Others have traced upon transparent paper nearly the whole of the Persian texts of the Yasna, as well as large portions of Haug's Persian manuscript of the Vendidad from Munich. Mr. Mills hopes at his death to leave at the Bodleian the finest collection of Parsi manuscripts in Europe.

In 1894 he wrote an article on "Zoroaster and the Bible" for the *Nineteenth Century Review* which was translated into Gujrati with his permission and with that of the Editor, and published in a large edition by the trustees of the Sir J. Jejeebhoy Translation Fund of Bombay. In the same year appeared in Roth's *Festgruss* his translation of Yasna XXVIII into Sanskrit. See also his translation of Yasna XLIV into Sanskrit, published in the *Transactions* of the International Congress of Orientalists, held in Paris in 1897. The object of these translations was to show that Zend is nearly Sanskrit. In 1892-4 Mr. Mills published his full edition of the Gāthas as in so far completed. It contains the Avesta texts with the Pahlavi, Sanskrit, and Persian texts as translations. The Pahlavi is there edited for the first time with the collation of manuscripts, and now prepared with all the manuscripts and translated into English. The Avesta text is translated verbatim into Latin with free metrical English accompanying it. A commentary follows (pp. 622, XXX), the whole affording nearly every alternative opinion of any importance. This work is now almost completely sold out, and commands £2. In 1898 he was appointed Professor of Zend Philology in the University of Oxford. In 1900 he issued his second edition of the Gāthas with the verbatim, this time in English, and with the free metrical revised. By the courtesy of the Delegates of the Clarendon Press he was permitted to add curtailed Introductory passages to the chapters from the XXXIst volume of the *Sacred Books of the East* (see *The Open Court*).

In 1902 he published the first section of his *Dictionary of the Gāthic language of the Zend Avesta*, Vol. III, and of the Gāthas, pp. 623-822. Further work on this book has been waiting for the appearance of a more general Dictionary long since announced by another scholar. In December 1902 he was made *ex officio* member of the Board of Oriental Studies by the Hebdomadal Council acting at the request of the Board. In May 1903 he was re-appointed Professor after most complimentary correspondence from the officials of the University. In the autumn of 1903 he published the first volume of his university lectures under the title *Zarathushtra, Philo, and Israel*, (see *The Open Court*). It should be "Zarathushtra,

Philo, the Achaemenids, and Israel." Vol. I is entitled "Zarathushtra and the Greeks," pp. 1-208 + viii. It attempts to deal exhaustively with the Logos of the Greek philosophical writers as compared with the leading Amshaspends of the Zendavesta. In May 1904 he was invited by the Hebdomadal Council to attend the forthcoming Congress of Orientalists at Algiers in April 1905 as a representative of the University. He has just recently accepted a contract to write a popular handbook of the Zoroastrian Religion for a London Parsi firm to be delivered in 1905. Under the same general influences a Gāthā Society has lately been formed in Bombay, the Vice-chancellor of the University presiding at its first meeting in September, 1904. Also a distinguished young Parsi priest of Bombay proposes to come to Oxford to spend two years in perfecting himself in the higher criticism of his subject.

Since 1901 Mr. Mills has been editing the other Pahlavi texts of the Yasna beside those mentioned above in the Gāthas, some eighteen odd chapters having already appeared in the *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, with the Srōsh Yasht soon to follow. These appear as for the first time edited with the collation of manuscript, and now with all the manuscripts collated (see the latest numbers). Yasna IX appeared with texts and translations in JRS and in JAOS. Translations accompany the others in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, (see the number for January, 1905, containing the Yasna Haptanghaiti, pp. 22).

Following the repeated and courteous invitations of the managers of the Belgian Orientalist quarterly, the *Muséon* of the University of Louvain, Mr. Mills has prepared the first chapter of the Pahlavi Yasna in the costly Oriental character, the workmanship of M. Istas, printer to the University, being of the highest order, (see the forthcoming number). In addition to the above Mr. Mills has transcribed from texts copied at the Bodleian during the last few years the entire remaining Persian texts of the Munich manuscript, the part containing the Gāthas having been already edited in his larger work. These texts are almost ready for the press.

These studies taken in connection with the XXXIst Volume of the *Sacred books of the East* really constitute a most elaborate critical work upon the Avesta texts of the Yasna, to which reference is made or implied at every sentence. He has a second volume of his university lectures, pp. 209-405 nearly ready.

Mr. Mills has now reached the age of sixty-eight with his general health unimpaired.